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Assistance in mine action

Report of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

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I. Introduction

1. At its 17th plenary meeting, on 20 September 2005, the General Assembly, on the recommendation of the General Committee, decided to include in the agenda of its sixtieth session the item entitled "Assistance in mine action" and to allocate it to the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee).

2. The Fourth Committee considered the item at its 17th, 18th, 20th and 23rd meetings, on 26 and 27 October and on 1 and 8 November 2005. The Committee held a general debate on the item at its 17th and 18th meetings, on 26 and 27 October, and took action on the item at its 23rd meeting, on 8 November (see A/C.4/60/SR.17, 18, 20 and 23).

3. At the 17th meeting, on 26 October, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations made an introductory statement. At the same meeting, the Committee held an interactive dialogue on the item with the representatives of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in the course of which the representatives of the Department heard comments and responded to questions (see A/C.4/60/SR.17).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.4/60/L.7/Rev.1

4. At its 20th meeting, on 1 November, the Committee had before it a draft resolution entitled "Assistance in mine action" (A/C.4/60/L.7). At the same meeting, the Committee decided to defer action on the draft resolution on the item.

5. At the 23rd meeting, on 8 November, the representative of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, on behalf of Albania, Andorra,

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Angola, Armenia, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Denmark, Finland, France, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Mali, Malta, Mauritius, Mexico, Monaco, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, the Republic of Moldova, Samoa, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, San Marino, Serbia and Montenegro, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, Thailand, Ukraine and the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, made a statement and introduced a revised draft resolution entitled "Assistance in mine action" (A/C.4/60/L.7/Rev.1), in which the second preambular paragraph, which read "*Noting* the 2005 World Summit Outcome", had been deleted. Subsequently, Bosnia and Herzegovina, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, Slovakia and Spain joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

6. At the same meeting, the Chairman stated that he had been informed by the Secretariat that there were no programme budget implications in connection with the draft resolution submitted on this item.

7. Also at its 23rd meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.4/60/L.7/Rev.1 without a vote (see para. 9).

8. At the same meeting, the representatives of the United States of America and Israel made statements (see A/C.4/60/SR.23).

III. Recommendation of the Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee)

9. The Special Political and Decolonization Committee (Fourth Committee) recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Assistance in mine action*

The General Assembly,

Recalling its resolution 58/127 of 19 December 2003 and all its previous resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and mine action, all adopted without a vote,

Recalling all relevant treaties and conventions[1] and their review processes,

Reaffirming its deep concern at the tremendous humanitarian and development problems caused by the presence of mines and explosive remnants of war[2] that have serious and lasting social and economic consequences for the populations of countries affected by mines and explosive remnants of war,

Bearing in mind the serious threat that mines and explosive remnants of war pose to the safety, health and lives of local civilian populations, as well as of personnel participating in humanitarian, peacekeeping and rehabilitation programmes and operations,

Deeply alarmed by the number of mines that continue to be laid each year, as well as the presence of a decreasing but still very large number of, and area of square kilometres infested by, mines and explosive remnants of war as a result of armed conflicts, and therefore remaining convinced of the necessity and urgency of strengthening mine-action efforts by the international community with a view to eliminating the threat of landmines and explosive remnants of war to civilians as soon as possible,

Recognizing that, in addition to the primary role of States, the United Nations has a significant role to play in the field of assistance in mine action, and considering mine action to be an important and integrated component of United Nations humanitarian and development activities, as well as noting the inclusion of mine action in several United Nations peacekeeping operations,

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* As referred to in previous resolutions of the General Assembly on assistance in mine clearance and on assistance in mine action.

[1] These include the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction, 1997; the Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby Traps and Other Devices, as amended in 1996 (Protocol II to the 1980 Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects); the Protocol on Explosive Remnants of War, 2003 (Protocol V to the 1980 Convention) (not in force as at 27 October 2005); and the Protocol Additional to the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949, and relating to the Protection of Victims of International Armed Conflicts (Protocol I), 1977.

[2] As defined by Protocol V to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects.

Stressing the need to convince mine-affected States to halt new deployments of anti-personnel mines in order to ensure the effectiveness and efficiency of mine-clearance operations,

Stressing also the pressing need to urge non-State actors to halt immediately and unconditionally new deployments of mines and other associated explosive devices,

1. *Calls*, in particular, for the continuation of the efforts of States, with the assistance of the United Nations and relevant organizations involved in mine action, as appropriate, to foster the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities in countries in which mines and explosive remnants of war constitute a serious threat to the safety, health and lives of the local civilian population or an impediment to social and economic development efforts at the national and local levels;

2. *Urges* all States, in particular those that have the capacity to do so, as well as the United Nations system and relevant organizations and institutions involved in mine action, as appropriate, to provide:

(a) Assistance to countries affected by mines and explosive remnants of war for the establishment and development of national mine-action capacities;

(b) Support for national programmes, where appropriate, in cooperation with the relevant bodies of the United Nations system and relevant regional, governmental and non-governmental organizations, to reduce the risks posed by landmines and explosive remnants of war, including to women and children;

(c) Reliable, predictable and timely contributions for mine-action activities, including through national mine-action efforts and humanitarian mine-action programmes of non-governmental organizations, including those relating to victim assistance and mine risk education, especially at the local level, as well as through the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and relevant regional trust funds for assistance in mine action;

(d) Necessary information and technical, financial and material assistance to locate, remove, destroy and otherwise render ineffective minefields, mines, booby traps, other devices and explosive remnants of war, in accordance with international law, as soon as possible;

(e) Technological assistance to countries affected by mines and explosive remnants of war;

and to promote user-oriented scientific research on and development of mine-action techniques and technology, within reasonable time frames;

3. *Encourages* efforts to conduct all mine-action activities in accordance with accepted national standards and with the International Mine Action Standards, where applicable, and emphasizes the importance of using an information management system, such as the Information Management System for Mine Action, to help facilitate mine-action activities;

4. *Encourages* all relevant multilateral, regional and national programmes and bodies to include, in coordination with the United Nations, activities related to mine action, including mine clearance, in their humanitarian, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development assistance activities, where appropriate, bearing in

mind the need to ensure national and local ownership, sustainability and capacity-building, as well as to include a gender and age-appropriate perspective in all aspects of such activities;

5. *Stresses* the importance of cooperation and coordination in mine action, and emphasizes the primary responsibility of national authorities in that regard, also stresses the supporting role of the United Nations and other relevant organizations in that regard, and underlines the need for continuous assessment of the role of the United Nations in mine action;

6. *Notes* the potential that mine action can have as a peace and confidence-building measure in post-conflict situations among parties concerned;

7. *Declares* that 4 April of each year shall be officially proclaimed and observed as International Day for Mine Awareness and Assistance in Mine Action;

8. *Requests* the Secretary-General to submit to the General Assembly at its sixty-second session a report on the implementation of the present resolution and on follow-up to previous resolutions on assistance in mine clearance and assistance in mine action, including on relevant United Nations policies and activities;

9. *Decides* to include in the provisional agenda of its sixty-second session the item entitled "Assistance in mine action".